

Message Text

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66

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SWF-01 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-06 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-02 SP-02

STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-03 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SS-15

NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 /087 W

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R 051843Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5403

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

UNCLAS LONDON 14442

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH OPINION POLL ON EC MEMBERSHIP

1. A LOUIS HARRIS POLL PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 4 INDICATES THAT A MAJORITY OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC WOULD LIKE THE UK TO REMAIN IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND TO TRY TO IMPROVE ITS TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP.

2. THE POLL WAS TAKEN IN THE LATTER HALF OF OCTOBER. THE SAMPLE WAS ASKED TO CHOOSE ONE OF FOUR ALTERNATIVES. THE RESULTS WERE: A) WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COMMON MARKET AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE -- L6 PER CENT; B) WITHDRAW UNLESS BETTER TERMS ARE OBTAINED -- L5 PER CENT; C)

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REMAIN A MEMBER AND TRY TO OBTAIN BETTER TERMS -- 53

PER CENT; D) REMAIN A MEMBER ON PRESENT TERMS -- 6 PER CENT; E) DON'T KNOW -- 10 PER CENT.

3. COMMENT: IN ITS ARTICLE ON THIS POLL, THE FINANCIAL TIMES CLAIMS THAT IT SHOWS A "MARKED REVERSAL OF PUBLIC ATTITUDE" IN FAVOR OF MEMBERSHIP. WE DO NOT AGREE. PREVIOUS POLLS CITED BY THE FINANCIAL TIMES SHOW A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONSIDERING MEMBERSHIP TO BE A "BAD THING." ASKING FOR ATTITUDES TOWARD MEMBERSHIP, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE SAME AS ASKING WHETHER BRITAIN SHOULD STAY IN. SOME OF THOSE WHO DO NOT LIKE THE COMMUNITY APPEAR NEVERTHELESS RELUCTANT TO ADVOCATE WITHDRAWAL. OPINION ON WITHDRAWAL HAS REMAINED FAIRLY CONSISTENT OVER THE PAST YEAR. A POLL TAKEN IN JULY 1973, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOWED 29 PER CENT FAVORING WITHDRAWAL, AND 65 PER CENT IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP ON EXISTING OR IMPROVED TERMS (SEE REFTTEL).

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Message Attributes

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